

HOLMFIRTH TOWN CENTRE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS JUNE 2001

Introduction

Since 1996, Planning Services of Kirklees M.C. has carried out a series of town centre audits to monitor the health and performance of shopping centres in the District. The time series data enables the role of individual town centres to be assessed, identifying the scope for change, renewal and diversification.

This represents the first statement of an annual publication that will briefly examine 6 indicators of health and vitality as they relate to Holmfirth town centre. The indicators covered are:

- retail occupancy in terms of floorspace and shop units,
- vacancy rates,
- pedestrian footfall,
- retail development pipeline,
- retailer demand, and
- prime retail rents.

Retail floorspace, shop units and vacancy

A survey of occupancy, undertaken in May 2001, recorded that Holmfirth town centre provides a total of 80,739 sq.ft. of net retail floorspace (7,503 sq.m.). The following tables illustrate changes in retail floorspace and shop unit occupancy over the last 12 months.

Retail floorspace in Holmfirth town centre (sq.ft. net)

	Convenience ¹	Comparison ²	Vacant	TOTAL
2000	20,228 (26.9%)	44,115 (58.7%)	10,824 (14.4%)	75,167 (100%)
2001	19,814 (24.5%)	42,915 (53.2%)	18,010 (22.3%)	80,739 (100%)
% change 2000 - 01	-2.0	-2.7	66.4	7.4

It can be seen that the total retail floorspace in the town centre has increased by 7.4%. This is largely attributable to a number of office units and two public houses becoming vacant. Due to their central location, each property is recorded as having the potential to provide retail floorspace. Consequently, vacancy rates have significantly increased.

Of all the vacant properties in the town, nearly half (48%) have been vacant for more than 12 months. A number of these are located along Dunford Road which lies on the periphery of the shopping area. The largest vacant property is the former Lodges building which straddles the River Holme in Towngate. This has stood vacant for many years.

There are few national multiples represented in the town. Of those who are present, the Co-op food store in Crown Bottom is by far the largest.

The town is characterised by small independent shops and services, many of which rely on the trade generated from tourism. Reflecting the tourism base of the local economy, the representation of services such as cafes, restaurants, pubs and takeaways is well above the national average. Similarly, retailers specialising in gifts, antiques and crafts have a strong presence in the town.

Shop units in Holmfirth town centre

	Convenience	Comparison	Service ³	Vacant	TOTAL
2000	14 (8.1%)	91 (53%)	51 (29.6%)	16 (9.3%)	172 (100%)
2001	14 (8.3%)	86 (51.2%)	45 (26.8%)	23 (13.7%)	168 (100%)
% change 2000 - 01	0	-5.5	-11.7	43.8	-2.3

Floorspace comparisons ('000 sq.ft. net)

	Holmfirth	Cleckheaton	Heck'wike	Mirfield
Convenience	19.8 (24.5%)	20.0 (24.3%)	45.8 (41.5%)	22.4 (31.9%)
Comparison	42.9 (53.2%)	54.3 (66%)	49.1 (44.5%)	40.0 (56.9%)
Vacant	18.0 (22.3%)	8.0 (9.7%)	15.5 (14%)	7.9 (11.2%)
Total retail floorspace	80.7 (100%)	82.3 (100%)	110.4 (100%)	70.3 (100%)
No. of vacant units	23 (13.7%)	15 (8.8%)	32 (19.5)	10 (10.9%)
Total no. of units	168 (100%)	170 (100%)	164 (100%)	92 (100%)

Pedestrian footfall

Holmfirth pedestrian footfall: morning and afternoon sample counts

Survey location	28th March Non-market day		29th March Market day		24th February Saturday		25th February Sunday	
	Damp		Cold and wet		Cold, sunny and dry		Cold, sunny and dry	
Time ⁴	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm	am	pm
1. Co-op	115	118	140	133	357	311	194	267
2. Cooper Lane Jct.	227	226	404	337	557	508	133	320
3. Upperthong Lane Jct.	114	142	161	94	194	277	86	206
4. Victoria Street	372	357	545	389	605	700	195	547
5. Hollowgate	132	172	311	182	189	274	166	194
6. Dunford Road	40	36	45	31	83	66	26	47
7. Towngate	21	22	29	21	48	36	9	14
8. Station Road	79	64	179	128	181	247	105	211
TOTAL	1100	1137	1814	1315	2214	2419	914	1806

The pedestrian footfall count is designed to measure the volume and pattern of pedestrian flow through the town centre. Hour sample counts were conducted at 10:30am and 2:30pm along with a series of 15 minute "pinch counts" throughout the day. Eight locations were chosen and these are identified on the map overleaf. They include shopping frontages, important pedestrian links and the entrance to the Co-op supermarket.

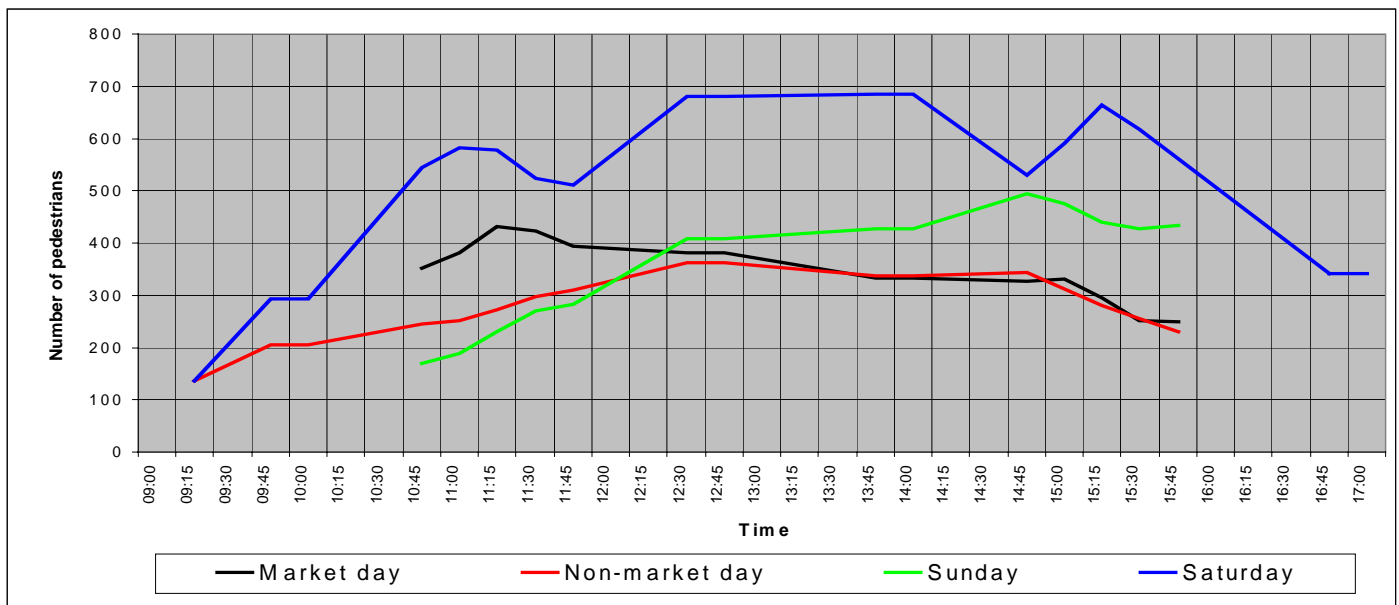
Pedestrian numbers on a Saturday well exceed those recorded on any other weekday. Furthermore, this level of activity is maintained throughout the day (9.00am to 5.00pm) as the graph below clearly demonstrates. The presence of visitor attractions based on the "Last of the Summer Wine" television series ensures good weekend footfall.



Market day mornings exhibit higher levels of shopper activity than non-market day mornings. However, from lunchtime onwards pedestrian numbers are broadly the same, even to the extent of showing a similar late afternoon decline.

Victoria Street, the town's main shopping street records the highest pedestrian footfall, with significant numbers also monitored on Huddersfield Road near Cooper Lane. The Co-op foodstore (and its surface level car park) has a strong draw. It is also noted that shoppers who use the store visit other shops and services in the town centre. Disappointingly, few people seem to access the town centre by public transport.

Total pedestrian numbers: daily profile



Development pipeline

Development since 1990

Holmfirth town centre has witnessed a number of significant developments over the last 10 years. These include the construction of a purpose built foodstore for the Co-op on Market Street in 1996, the relocation of the market from Market Street to refurbished premises on Huddersfield Road, and the conversion of the old "Valley Theatre" on Market Walk to provide a cinema (the "Picturedrome").

Holmfirth continues to attract housing developers, although the topography of the area causes problems of accessibility with many steep, narrow roads leading out of the town. Recent government guidance (PPG3) has put the emphasis on bringing forward "brownfield" or urban sites for housing before considering the development of "greenfield" sites. Consequently, Holmfirth will be the subject of further developer interest that is likely to put increased pressure on the town's highway infrastructure. Nevertheless, opportunities do exist within and adjoining the town centre for housing schemes that are of an appropriate scale and of a sympathetic and quality design.

The Victoria Street bridge over the River Holme is currently the subject of improvement works which has caused some disruption in the town. However, the project is necessary in order to strengthen the bridge that has been weakened over the years due to heavy traffic. There are also plans to create a riverside footpath along the River Holme along with possibly a footbridge linking the bus station with the Old Bridge Hotel car park.



A typical back street of Holmfirth

Outside the Study Area boundary, other development projects (excluding housing schemes) include extension work to the Elmwood Hospital on Huddersfield Road and improvements to facilities at Sands Recreation Ground.

Although every care and effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data and statements contained in this publication, Planning Services does not accept responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies which may have occurred therein.



Specialist retail in Holmfirth

Retailer demand

An assessment of retailer demand was undertaken in June 2001. This identified that there are three businesses which have expressed a requirement for representation in Holmfirth. These include a womens clothes shop with a maximum floorspace requirement of 1500 sq.ft. (139 sq.m.), a public house (4000 sq.ft. or 372 sq.m.) and a variety/discount store with a requirement for 5000 sq.ft. (465 sq.m.).

This list should not be treated as definitive. There may be other retailers who have a requirement for Holmfirth or who may wish to relocate within the town centre to larger and/or better quality premises but have not registered their interest. Furthermore, the assessment has not addressed the demand that may exist from financial and professional services for office accommodation within the town centre.

Prime retail rental levels

Due to the size of the town centre, the nature of occupancy and the few property transactions that have taken place, information on rental levels is very difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, it would appear that for shop premises in Victoria Street and around the Victoria Street/Huddersfield Road junction rents are in the region of £12 - £16 per sq.ft. (£129 - £172 per sq.m.). In periphery shopping locations, rents can fall to just £5 per sq.ft. (£54 per sq.m.).

Rents are very much influenced by the quality of accommodation provided and, in the case of premises outside the shopping core, by the proximity of specific "attractions" such as the market and "Nora Batty's steps".

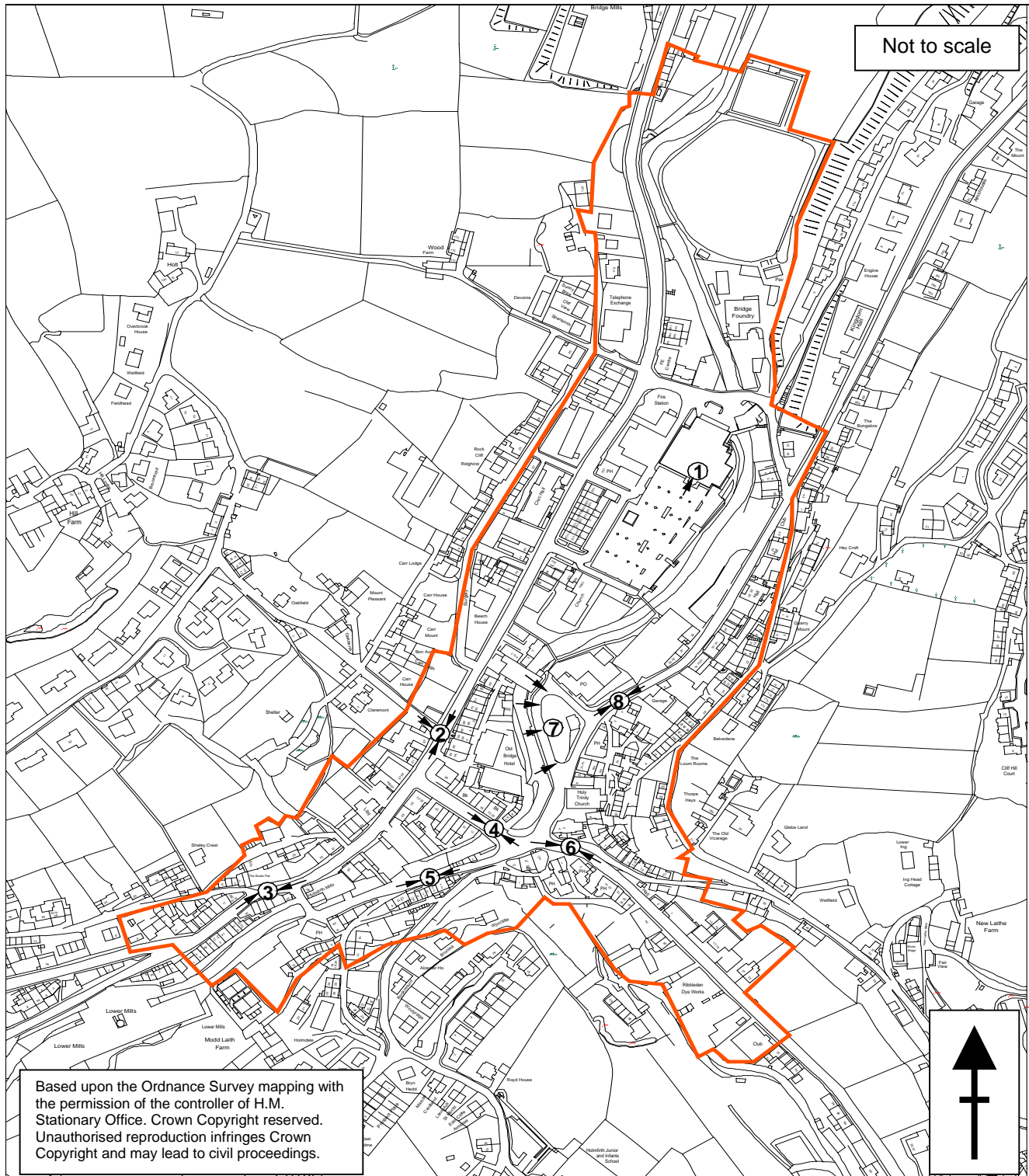
¹ Convenience goods figures include food, drink and tobacco, newspapers and magazines and household goods such as matches, soap and cleaning materials.

² Comparison goods figures include A1 uses such as opticians and travel agents etc.

³ Service uses are those that offer services rather than goods to the public. Examples include banks, estate agents and restaurants.

⁴ Figures given here relate to hour samples extracted from the profile counts, taken from 10:30am and from 2.30pm. Convenience goods figures include food, drink and tobacco, newspapers and magazines.

Holmfirth study area boundary and pedestrian count locations



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Co-op main entrance (in only) | 5 Hollowgate (2 ways) |
| 2 Huddersfield Road/Cooper Lane (3 ways) | 6 Dunford Road (2 ways) |
| 3 Upperthong Lane/Hudds Road (2 ways) | 7 Towngate (people entering town by bus) |
| 4 Victoria Street (2 ways) | 8 Station Road (2 ways) |



Kirklees
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Produced by:
The Town Centres Team
Planning Services, Kirklees M.C.
P.O. Box B93, Civic Centre III
Huddersfield, HD1 2JR
Tel: 01484 221628 Fax: 01484 221613
E-mail: carol.dean@kirkleesmc.gov.uk

